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Testimony in Support of SB 132: An Act Concerning Funding for the Consortium of Connecticut Art Museums

By Senator Toni Boucher

March 6, 2014

Chairman LeBeau, Chairman Perone, Ranking Member Frantz, Ranking Member Lavielle, and other distinguished members of the Commerce Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of SB 132: **An Act Concerning Funding for the Consortium of Connecticut Art Museums**. The consortium is a partnership between seven independent art museums throughout the state of Connecticut. One such institution in my district, the Aldrich Museum in Ridgefield, celebrated its fiftieth anniversary last year, and has drawn innumerable visitors from surrounding towns and beyond, with the impressive quality of its collection and exhibitions of contemporary art.

In this sense the Aldrich is representative of the museums in this consortium, all of which preserve a priceless artistic tradition for the public to enjoy. They have enormous value as tourist destinations, and generate business for nearby shops and restaurants. The museums also serve a vital educational role. In 2012 over 6000 Connecticut students visited the Aldrich Museum and thousands more participated in the workshops and summer art camps that it offers. Many of these students come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and through the Aldrich Museum and its partners in the consortium they are provided with a broad and intensive exposure to the arts that may be lacking at school.

By allocating more funding to the consortium, we will allow these museums to expand and maintain these exhibitions and workshops and to market these activities effectively to the public. This is an excellent opportunity to help these institutions add to the economic and artistic enrichment that they have provided to our state over many years. They are a cornerstone of arts education in Connecticut and a vital part of our cultural landscape.

I urge the Commerce Committee to support SB 132 and thank you for your time and consideration.